

### Definition of Dementia:

An acquired complex of intellectual deterioration which affects at least two areas of cognitive function. Decline must effect ability to function normally. A syndrome, not a diagnosis. \*\*

Type of Dementia	Percentage of All Dementia Types <small>Approximate</small>	Causes	Behavior Hallmarks
<b>Alzheimer's Disease</b>	<b>60%</b>	<b>Degenerative Disease</b> causing "plaques & tangles" to build up in the brain, resulting in scar tissue that kills and shrinks brain. Begins in the <u>hippocampus</u> – the area of the brain that translates short-term memory into long term memory.	<b>Progressive, slow decline over time in global function</b> (listed in order of progression) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Short-term memory</li> <li>▪ Executive function*</li> <li>▪ Judgement</li> <li>▪ Word naming</li> <li>▪ Motor skills</li> <li>▪ Recognizing things</li> </ul>
<b>Lewy Body Dementia</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>Degenerative Disease</b> associated with an accumulation of <u>Lewy Bodies</u> (also seen in Parkinson's disease) in parietal and occipital lobes of the brain - causing impairment in cognitive function.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Periods of short-term confusion</li> <li>▪ Problems with attention span</li> <li>▪ Agitation, hallucinations, paranoia</li> <li>▪ Problems recognizing people</li> <li>▪ Depression, irritability</li> <li>▪ Difficulty with way finding, visual-spatial tasks</li> <li>▪ Sleep disturbances</li> <li>▪ Parkinson like (rigidity) symptoms in legs and arms</li> <li>▪ Memory problems are few, fluctuating</li> </ul>
<b>Mixed Dementia</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>Combination of degenerative disease and other type of dementia</b> (e.g., Alzheimer's & multi-infarct)	
<b>Vascular Dementia (Multi-Infarct or Mini-Strokes)</b>	<b>5%</b>	<b>Circulatory disease</b> of heart and blood vessels. High blood pressure, plaque build-up in arteries, etc. resulting in stroke or mini-strokes that damage areas of the brain. Associated with diabetes, smoking, high cholesterol.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Decline is abrupt, stepwise progression</li> <li>▪ Episodes of unexplained confusion</li> <li>▪ Very slow moving and thinking, stops initiating activities, becomes agitated when rushed</li> <li>▪ Apathy, loss of interest, withdrawal, negative outlook, loss of self-confidence</li> <li>▪ Self-neglect</li> <li>▪ Treatment resistant depression</li> <li>▪ Obsessively preoccupied with certain things</li> </ul>

Type of Dementia	% of all Dementia	Causes	Behavior Hallmarks
<b>Other Dementias</b>	<b>10%</b>	Causes are listed Below	
<b>Frontal Lobe Dementia &amp; Picks Disease</b>	<b>(Rare)</b>	<b>Genetically influenced disease process.</b> Only the frontal lobe is affected, resulting in primarily behavioral problems, not memory problems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extremely restless, up and down exploring environment</li> <li>Strong psychiatric symptoms - personality changes, apathy</li> <li>Lack of judgement, empathy or insight</li> <li>Social and personal neglect</li> <li>Rigid behavior</li> <li>Hyperactivity – oral and sexual</li> <li>Impaired emotional control</li> <li>Language impairment</li> <li>Not memory impaired</li> </ul>
<b>Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease</b>	<b>(Rare)</b>	<b>Virus</b> – same one that causes “Mad Cow’s Disease”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very quick and terminal decline</li> <li>Classified as a type of “Prion” disorder</li> </ul>
<b>Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson’s Disease, Huntington’s Chorea</b>	<b>(Small)</b>  <b>(Rare)</b>	<b>Diseases of the nervous system.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Primarily physical symptoms at onset</li> <li>Eventually result in cognitive decline – sporadic problems, hallucinations, disorientation etc.</li> </ul>
<b>Brain Damage:</b> Alcohol abuse, brain injury, AIDS, toxic environments etc.	<b>(Small)</b>	<b>Brain trauma resulting in damage.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sometimes losses can show some improvement if toxins are removed (e.g., alcohol)</li> </ul>

**\*Executive function** includes: making a plan and carrying it out, weighing information and making good decisions, initiating activities, appropriate social behavior. Personality characteristics and denial of memory problems are also associated with executive function.

**\*\*In addition**, the cognitive impairments must be severe enough to cause impairment in social and occupational functioning. Importantly, the decline must represent a decline from a previously higher level of functioning. Finally, the diagnosis of dementia should NOT be made if the cognitive deficits occur exclusively during the course of a (usually short-term) delirium.

**NOTE:** There are many different types of dementia (approximately 70 to 80). Some of the major disorders causing dementia are: degenerative diseases (e.g., Alzheimer’s disease, Pick’s disease), vascular dementia (e.g., multi-infarct dementia) anoxic dementia (e.g., cardiac arrest) traumatic dementia (e.g., dementia pugilistica [boxer’s dementia]) infectious dementia (e.g., Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease) toxic dementia (e.g., alcoholic dementia) **The Alzheimer’s Association estimates that one in 10 persons over 65 and nearly half of those over 85 have Alzheimer’s disease.**

Information Sources: American Psychiatric Association: Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fourth Edition. Washington, D.C, American Psychiatric Association, 1994. Alzheimer’s Association 2002. Elder Advocates Inc. - Drs. Kim & Gail Peterson – “Understanding and Responding to Behaviors of Dementia” 2000.